A SACRED POEME

DESCRIBING

THE MIRACVLOVS LIFE AND DEATH

OF THE GLORIOVS CONVERT

S. MARIE OF ÆGIPT

Who paſſed fortie ſeauen yeares in the deſarts leading a penitentiall life to the aſtonishment of all ſucceeding ages.

Plerumque gratior eſt Deo feruens poſt culpam vita; quam ſecuritate torpens innocentia. D. Greg.



THE ARGVMENT
OF THE POEM FROM
APPROVED AVTHORS.

MARY THE ÆGIPTIAN being but 12. yeares old, left her Parents and came to Alexandria: where for 17 yeares she prostituted her selfe to insatiable lust. And to allure more to her company, exposed on free cost to their pleasure, maynt ayning her self in the meane time by begging and spinning of wool. It hapned that many sailed to Hierusalem to celebrate the festiuity of the exaltation of the Holy Crosse; whither she also trauelled not out of piety, but to gaine new associats to her sensual delights. And now arriued euen at the gates of the Temple, the rest continually entring, she alone strangely suffred repulse. Which hauing 3. or 4. times susteyned; at length she vnderstood that for her sinnes she was deemed vnworthy to behold the holy Crosse. Wherefore seriously touched with compunction, and prostrate before an Image of the Blessed Virgin, she implored her aide, that with the rest she might behold & honor that sacred Instrument of our Redẽption; promising from that time neuer to contaminate her self with luxurious impurities. Then assaying to enter, she found no stoppage as before; but (like the sea rowling forward the waues) the multitude impelle her into the Temple. There according to her desire, hauing honoured the sanctified wood; she returned to the place, where formerly she had made her promise to the Blessed Virgin. And a voice from heauen directed her how she should dispose of her self for the glory of God

and

and her eternal behoof. Wherupon taking with her three loaues of course bread, she hastned to the wildernes; and there for the space of 47. yeares, liued in such austerity as she neither beheld man nor liuing creature, confining her self to the presence of God and his Angels her sole spectators; her loaues after lōg tract of time being spent, she for 17 yeares sustained her feeble body with hearbs onely & rootes; her garments rotting & falling from her: she was long so afflicted with winters cold and scorching heats of that clymate, as often fainting & void of breath, she layd on the ground destitute of sense & motion. For the first 17. yeares after her entrance into the wildernes, she was assayled with vgly and violent temptations; but through diuine assistance still victorious. To conclude after a wonderful and most penitential life, interseasoned with diuine consolations, Zozimas (a blessed Monk) coming into that part of the desart, found her out; and ministred vnto her the B. Sacrament on the Euening of Maundy Thursday, and after spiritual conference with her departed the yeare following vpon her appointment, returning he found her deceased in a caue: whither a lyon then approaching digged vp a graue, in which with teares & prayers she was interred by Zozimas. The Romane Martyrologe and Vsuard recount her day the 2. of Aprill. The Grecians in their Menaloge obserue it the day before. Nicephorus lib. 7. cap. 5. affirmeth her life to haue been written by Sophronius Bishop of Hierusalem. The same is cited in the 2. Councell of Nice. And by St. Iohn Damascen. orat. 3. de Imag: and translated into Latine by Paul Diacon. Neopoleas, is extant in Vitis Patrum: it was also composed in verse by Hyldebrand Episc. Senon: and by Bonad. Santon lib. 3. Monad: 29. and others. She liued about the yeare of Christ. 520. in the time of Iustine the elder.

THE



THE MIRACVLOVS LIFE OF S. MARIE OF ÆGIPT.

MARY of *Ægypt's* life I ſing, and crimes,
To no leſſe guilty, much more hardned times.
Smile truth: and ye, who both by choyce and name
(O happy) may ſo great a patron clayme,
Great in hir looſeneſſe, greater in reſtraint,
A wondrous ſinner, a more wondrous ſaint.
If my weake muſe long nurſt in wanton lore
Led by a better choice, then t'was before,
(Bleſt ſoule) thy prayſes chante: oh ſee and loue
The firſt fruites of hir pennance: from aboue
Direct hir flight, whiles she thy trophyes ſings,
And impe new feathers to hir tainted wings.
Chriſts faithful ſpouſe which long had groand, oppreſt
By hell-bred Arriâns ſwarming in the eaſt,

After th' amazement of that horrid night,
Was now reſtored to hir wonted light
By *Iuſtin* namd the Elder: fears were paſt,
And (wicked errour by faire truth diſplaſt')
The Church inioyed an vniuerſal peace
Prayſing the giuer: ſo when loud ſtormes ceaſe,
The merchant ſafe, paves on the calmer ſhore,
Such thankefull vowes as he had made before.
The now free temples through the cittye, were
Throngd' by al ſortes of people: pſalmes each where
With hymnes of ioy are ſhrilld' by euéry tongue,
And loud TE-DEVM's by the Clergy ſung.
The noyſe rings through the ayre: a pleaſing ſound.
And there receaud', doth with new ioy rebound
From th' ecchôing angels to th'allmighty's ears,
Who pleaſed with their zeale, from ſtarre-crownd' ſpheres
Viewing the citty and imperial throne
Of great *Byzantium*: approues what's don.
Thence Eaſtward twining his all-ſeeing eyes,
The ſacred land of *paleſtine* ſurueyes,
No regiön ſo forcibly inuites
His mild aſpect, no ayre ſo much delights:
For there's his garden, there thoſe happy groaues
Where firſt he ſtoopt' (o ſtrange) to mortal loues:
There *Caluarye* showërd with æternal blood,
There *Sion*, *Oliuet*, and *Iordans* flood,
There *Nazareth*; *Bethlem*, powérfullye arreſt
His heauenlye eye: and oh, aboue the reſt,
Here him a band of liuing ſaints inuites
(Poore Thred-bare monkes) to grace their pious rites:

Th'almighty's

Th'almighty's ſelf their burning zeal admires,
Their many altars, and perpetual quyers,
Their cloſe retired walkes, their ſilent celles,
Their lowely cloyſters, and farre diſtant welles,
So ſuncke of purpoſe that their drinke and meate
Might æqually be purchaſt with their ſweat,
For they their food ſeeke in the open fields,
Or eate the croppe which their owne labour yeelds.
Here contemplation without noyſe or ſtrife
Inioyes it's peace, mixt with the actiue life,
Whiles *Mary* ſighing ſwimmes in pious teares,
Laborious *Marthe* hir burden gladly beares:
For loue both ſiſters in one bond vnites,
Shares æqually their labours and delights:
The world's great Ruler playes his part the whiles,
Addes flame to flames, and at their feruour ſmiles.
Yet no one ſoule could fixe with more delight
Th'almighty's eye, then that poore naked wight
Which howling from the deſart, with Loud cryes
And doleful clamours rent the iniurd' skyes:
Groueling on earth, hir eyes bathd' in warme ſtreames,
Hir witherd armes parcht' with Sol's fyêry beames
Stretcht at their length: the reſt, a naked coarſe
In hoary treſſes clad: with zealous force
She beates at heauens bright gates: and ſtrong in faith
Vrgeth hir pardon: and hir pardon hath:
Haue mercy lord, the worſt of ſinners prayes,
Mercy my god: forget my damnëd dayes,
For hir deare ſake, whoſe bleſſed name I beare:
Ah can a *Mary* pray, and thou not heare?

O powêrfull charme! the very name could moue
Both the effects of pardon, and of loue.
That euerlaſting goodneſſe which long ſince
Had razd' the memôry of hir former ſinnes,
And thoſe blacke characters, which hir true tears
Had (for theſpace of ſeuen and forty years)
washt with vnwearied ſtreames: not pleaſd' that she
(whoſe life t'all ſinners might a comfort be,
And had ſo pleaſed his eternal eye)
Vnknowne, vnhonourd', in thoſe shades should dye,
Pointed out of his all fore-ſeeing care
A graue old moncke, his wonders to declare:
A glorious father, *Zozimus* his name,
In goodneſſe great, great in deſert and fame,
And who perhaps much greater might haue been,
Had he been leſſe in his owne greatneſſe ſeen:
Poore man already he ſeemd' euen to play
On vertu's green, and to haue won the day,
Sings ioyful Pæans, gloryes in his years,
Growne hoary in long pennance: and appears
That deſart's onely ſunne (in his owne ſight)
Whence yonger ſaints receaued' a borrôwed light.
Vnwiſe: for whiles he ſnatcheth at a crowne
Which might ere long, haue iuſtly been his owne,
He falles: thinkes darkneſſe light: falles ſtil, and euen
As he is falling, thinkes he mounts to heauen,
So when our Northern Tine ſwelles ore the ſtrands,
Planing the fatal foard with both the lands:

Some

Some daring traueller ſpurres on enragd',
Nor ſees the perill, til too far ingagd',
Meaſûring his owne life by the ſea-like ſtreames,
Too late alas, intrapt' twixt two extreames
He doubtful pauſeth, if he forward preſſe
The danger's great, should he turne backe, not leſſe:
Mean time, pale fear his better ſence bereaues,
And fiercer currant his weake eye deceaues,
For ſtil borne downe by it's reſiſtleſſe force,
Stil dreames he rides too high: his wiſer horſe
Bears ſtrongly with the ſtreame, but toyles in vain;
His maiſter maiſters him: ſome-one amaine
Whoopes from the shoare, Bear vp, Bear vp: he hears:
But falſe eyes truſts more then his truer ears:
Til ſwept away by the remorſeleſſe flood
H'is loſt, and makes it's fatal ſir-name good.
Such or much worſe might haue been *Zozims* end,
Had he not heard à farre more powêrful friend,
Who through the organs of a whiſtling wind,
In aéry ſounds thus check't his aery mind:
Many, as aâged, more holy, and leſſe proud,
Their vertues in this ſacred deſart shrowd:
Flye therefore hence, and leaue the place, in which
Pride and ſelf-loue thy better thoughts bewitch:
A Conuent neere the bankes of *Iordan* ſtands,
Not great in circuit, or extent of lands,
But great in ſanctity: ther ſeeke, and find
The cûre of a ſelf-delighted mind.

His

His eyes are opend', and his ſin appears
More great, augmented by inſuing fears,
For what can now ſecürehim, who fel
(Thinking himſelf in heauen) as deepe as Hel:
He falles as lowe, as he had ſoard' too high,
Antheus-like reſuming ſtrength there by:
For whiles he proſtrat cleaues t'his mother earth,
By blazôning in it's molde his baſer birth,
He riſeth, ſtronger then he was before,
Leſſe in his owne eye, but in god's much more:
And takes his iourney, guided by that hand
Which earſt when *Abram* left his natiue land,
His houſe and friends, was with him in his way,
And held him leaſt he from truth's path should ſtray.
A witherd ſticke his trembling iointes ſuſtaines,
Whiles wandring through vaſt woodes, and vaſter plaines,
Stil from aboue imploring light and grace,
He ſeekes neere Iordan the deſired place:
Which where the riuer ſtraitned twixt two hilles
The hanging cliffes with hollowe ecchoes shrilles,
He found at laſt: a Conuent of ſmal showe
Yet well contriued', the walles and roafe, both lowe.
No gluring outſide, no art's new deuiſe,
Of curious worldlings to allure the eyes:
No path but one, and that but litle vſd',
Which brought our *zozim* in himſelf confuſd'
At ſuch retyredneſſe, to one onely gate,
It opening from within: there weake he ſate
With griefe and toyle: his former life now blames,
And theſe poore monkes thrice happy he proclaimes,

Whoſe

Whoſe inward ſanctitye he quickly gueſt
By What, their outward ſolitude expreſt:
Thus humbled in himſelf, he knockes with fear
As one not worthy to find entrance there.
The porter (hauing eyed him through the grate)
Informes his Prelat of his forme and ſtate:
He ſtrait deſcending, in the entry meets
The ſtranger: whom imbracing, thus he greets:
Welcom graue father: what could we deſerue?
Vnworthy ſeruants of him whom you ſerue,
That you ſhould viſit vs here, poore beginners,
Il mortifyed and halfe-conuerted ſinners?
Zozim abasht, bends his brim-ſwelling eyes
Downe to the earth: and ſighing thus replyes:
I ſeek perfectiôn here, growne old in pride
O take me for his ſake who for ſuch dyed.
The Abbot glad receaues him: there he liues
With ſaints, a ſaint: and diſinchanted giues
Not now t'himſelf, but to thoſe holy ſyres
Vertue's full prayſe: ſees in them, and admires
Their patiênce, zeale, humilitye profound,
Rayſd' by pure rapts aboue the ſtarry round,
Nimble obedience, charitye in al,
Whoſe charter warrants it ſhal neuer fal,
Al things wel-orderd', and in the quyer
Perpetual vigils, harmonye, and prayer.
But winter now declining, had begun
To feele the powër of a warmer ſun
And Februarye old præpard' to yeeld
To ſpringing Marche the honour of the field,

Wensday the first of clensing dayes appeares
When the whole Conuent to one roome repaird'
And hauing crau'd assistance from aboue
Came forth in vnity, in peace, in loue,
Præpard' to crosse the riuer: as each year
In this blest season they accustomd' were,
To keep lent silent, nor to meete agen
Til the renewing of the sacred Cene.
The gate as loathe to part with such loud' ghests
It's griefe in th'opening with lowd groanes attests,
whiles marching downe to *Iordan* the whole quyer
In order sings this psalme led by the Priour.

Psalme 26.

HEnce fear: our lord's my safety and my light:
My life's protector: what shal me affright?
Whiles bad men on me rusht, my flesh to teare,
My foes who vext' me feil, and weakened were:
Opposed Campes my courage shall not quell,
In battle strong here fixt my hopes shal dwel;
One thing I'ue askt our lord, this I'le request,
That in his house I all my dayes may rest,
That I his ioyes may view and temple blest;
For he hath kept me in his sanctuary, in
It's closest vaults, safe from the dayes of sin:
H'ath reard' me on the rock: and plac't me out
Of foe's reache: in his house I'ue romd' about,
Offring an hoaste of clamour: I will sing

And ſay a pſalme to heauen's æternal king:
My voyce o lord to thee loud-crying hear,
Haue mery on me, and to me giue ear,
To thee my heart ſpake, thee mine eyes deſire,
To thee o lord I euer will aſpire:
Turne not, nor in thy wrath decline thy face
From me thy ſeruant : help me with thy grace:
Oh doe not leaue nor ſleight me in thy ſcorne
My ſaûiour and my God : for me forlorne
My parents both haue left : but thou didſt take
Compaſſion on me. Lord vnto me make
A law in thy way, and the right path guide,
Leaſt my proud enemyes should thee deride:
Nor yeeld me to the willes of raging foes
For periurd' witneſſes againſt me roſe,
And ſin hath tyed' t'it ſelf: I shal, I truſt,
Thy ioyes ſee, in the region of the iuſt:
Expect our lord and manfully defend
Thy ſelf: take comfort, and our lord attend.

Amen.

Amen ſung lowde the pſalme concludes : Amen,
The ecchôing hilles and dales intone agen.
When they at Iordans bankes arriued, and ſtood
Muſing awhile vpon the ſacred flood,
The zealous troope with ioy recalles to mind
Thoſe wondrous ſignes of loue which to mankind
God there had shewd : ſalutes with humble vowes
The place, it's tutelar Genius: and bowes

In memôrye of it's ſaints : ſome groueling lye,
Kiſſe th'hallôwed bankes, and ſtreames as they ſlip by:
Some gladly vnder the bleſt current falle,
Some wash their heads, their handes and faces all:
Then ferrying ouer to the farther ſide
They into ſeueral pathes themſelues deuide,
Al to the deſart tending, none can ſtray
Vnleſſe he meeffe his fellowe in the way,
For then who firſt the other coming ſpyes
Leauing that walke, to thickes and couerts flyes,
Leaſt the shye enemye with ſecret pride
Should blaſt their better actions, When diſcryed
By more eyes then their owne. Oh that we could
Thoſe glorious conqueſts to the world vnfold,
which theſe religious fathers dayly gaind'
In their vnboaſted conflicts : whiles reſtraind
From mutual conſolations, oft aſſayld
By viſible ſpirits, they as oft præuayld'
Againſt their fyéry legiôns : reſtleſſe griefe,
Furious aſſaults, fresh combats, no relief,
No hope, but from aboue : oh tho the height
Of ſelf-contempt haue left in clowdes of night
Their memoryes obſcured : yet their fame
Characterd in wide heauen's immortal frame
Shal euer liue, and they for euer reſt
In the triumphant manſions of the bleſt.
Mongſt al theſe fathers which euen then prepard'
Their ſoules to their not rashly hopd' reward,
Not leaſt in goodneſſe, tho in order laſt;
The late checkt Zozimus with zealous haſt

Enters

Enters the ſolitude : ſpends nights and dayes
In heauenly contemplations : duely prayes
At his accuſtomd' howers : neuer eates
But when with famin forc't, and then ſuch meates
As the wild wood afforded : neuer ſleepes
But when ſtolne ſlumbers through the entries creepes
Of his watcht ſoule : then ſome knobd' tree in ſtead
Of pillow ſerues, the earth, his natiue bed,
Wide heauen his canopye, his rugge and sheetes
The froſt's pearld' deawe, cold rines, and piercing fleetes:
Where with his long white haire and hoarye beard
Intangled oft in icye knots appeard,
When ſome times guided by the morning ſtar,
Some times the ſlowe-pacd' waine-mans ſtooping car,
His weake legs (prompted by a ſtrong deſire
Where with it ſeemes the willing heaueus inſpire
His forward ſoule) reſume their dayly toyle
Wading through thicke and thin : new longings boyle
In's flaming breaſt, new thoughts infuſd' from heauen,
Make the rough wayes ſeeme ſmooth, the mountains euen.
While daylight ſerues his iourney neuer ends,
When night comes on, the night in tears he ſpends,
His truely humbled ſoule, now onely blind
To ſee it's owne perfections, earnes to find
Some ſaint-like father in that deſart place,
Who may inſtruct him in the waye of grace,
For this he makes reiterated vowes
To heauen : for this to earth his knees he bowes,
And ſtrong in faith tho for a time delayed
Perſiſts : ſtil praying hopes, ſtil hoping prayed

The twentyeth day night's foggye damps had cleard,
And brighter ſun vpon the heights appeard,
When he his howers ending, with the day
Renewed his taske, and weſtward tooke his way:
Weſt-ward far of vpon a plaine, he ſpyes,
Amouing bulke, of what his fayling eyes
Cannot yet iudge, but towards it he makes,
Doubling his pace, and at the neareſt takes,
Thwarting the ſpatious plaine: nor long it was
Ere he a doleful wretch, and naked as
Simplicitye it ſelf, diſcernd: whoſe face
(Tho black and old) yet wanted not it's grace:
Which in a count'nance graue, and wel compoſd
(Tho to al weathers and al ſuns expoſd')
Held good, againſt the iniuryes of time,
Of place, of griefe, and of the open clyme:
He ſtood aloofe: and viewed hir, whiles hir eye
Fixt on a higher obiect, paſt him by:
Hir age, hir naked chin, and vnshorne head,
Whence white criſpe lockes in froſty curles were ſpred
Ouer hir blacker necke, ſtrait made hir knowne,
A woman: or th'anatomye of one,
Long abſtinence and pennance hauing brought
Hir body to a leanneſſe beyond thought.
Pale trembling fear the monke's whole body shakes
And he his owne long-wished hopes miſtakes,
Thinkes that he ſees ſome ghoſt, or Hellish fiend,
To Tormente in that wilderneſſe confind'.
Yet curbes his fear, and bold in his owne right,
Prepares him: not vnuſed to ſuch fight:

The

The croſſe it's ſigne he formes, firſt on himſelf,
Then on the ayre, and the ſuppoſed elfe,
Whoſe much conſid'ring eye had neyther ſeen
Him nor his croſſe, but ſtil held on the green:
The monke ſtrait by a better thought inſpird',
Conceaues his happineſſe ſo long deſyrd',
For which he oft had ſighd', and oftimes prayd,
Whiles in that tedious ſolitude he ſtraid:
His ſudden fear to ſudden ioy giues place,
And he purſues hir ſteppes, whoſe ſaint-like face
Already he diſdaines not to implore,
But haſtning after, ſends theſe wordes before:
O ſtay thou bleſſed ſoule, by heauens beloud',
And be not at a ſinner's preſence moud'.
The ſolitary ſaint (whoſe long-cloſd ears
Had heard no voice in ſeuen and forty years,
Nor doleful eyes yet met with any face
Of mortal creature in that forlorne place)
Amazed' and blushing at hir naked plight,
Borne on the wings of ſhame takes ſpeedy flight,
And in thoſe long knowne woodes a skilful guide,
Striues in the depth of them hir ſhame to hide.
The aged father ſtrengthned with deſyre
Flying with equal ſpeed, purſues the flyer:
She faſt, he faſter runs, she prayes, he cryes:
And when his feet fayle followes with his eyes:
A wondrous race, ſole angels looking on,
Fitteſt ſpectatours when ſuch angels run:
But *Zozimus* winnes ground, and gets ſo near,
As she (he thought) theſe breathleſſe words might heare:

Oh ſtay: by his great name I thee coniure
For whom thou liuêſt in ſolitude obſcure:
Take pitty of mine aage, my ſiluer haires,
Whoſe froſty white the markes of reuêrence beares:
Hear me a doleful ſinner: ah regard
Theſe flowing tears: euen as thou hopes reward
After ſo ſtrange a pennance: doe not flye,
Nor crüel to a dying man denye
Thy prâyer and bleſſing: for his loue, I ſay,
Who ſlighteth none that with true feruour pray:
Thus praying th'old man ran, and running prayd'
Hyr anſwer ſhame, and inward griefe delayed:
He vext with labour, much more vext in mind,
Stil begs, ſtil cryes, ſtil's anſwerd with the wind.
A p[illegible]ne there was where in ſome winter-torrent
Had left the vaſt print, of it's elder current:
The shiuerd rockes and rent vp oakes yet showd',
How dreadfully it earſt had ouer flowed,
Now a drye channel, hollow, empty, wide,
Through which a litle brooke did ſtealing glide
Amongſt the crags and logges: which ſince that aage
The ſwelling flood had left, markes of it's rage:
Th'Ægiptian firſt to this drye gulfe attaind,
Slipt lightly through, and further bank had gaignd',
When th'old man panting, weake, and wholy ſpent,
Fearful to venture on the rough deſcent,
Takes vp: yet with his voice purſues the ſainct,
Reiterates with tears his late complaint,
Coniures hir by hir ſelf, thoſe tawes, that wood
The witneſſe of hir life, by al that's good

In heauen or earth: and finding all but vaine
Howles and laments his vndeſerued paine;
Then roaring out with doleful out cryes ſhrilles
The channel's concaue and the hanging hilles,
From whence redoubled they againe rebound
Through ecchoes ſad, a lamentable ſound.
The holy fugitif, mou'd with his tears,
Replyed at laſt, and thus made known hir fear:
Time-honourd *Zozimas*, whoſe life and name
I honour from my ſoule: bear with my ſhame,
And nakedneſſe, which ſhuns thy grauer eye
And tho vnwilling, yet is forc't to flye:
But if a caytif wretch thou needs wilt grace,
And longſt' to ſee a forlorne ſinner's face:
Lend me thy cloake that clad therein, I may
Bleſt with thy bleſſing, praying with thee pray:
The monke's amazd', to hear his name from one
To whom he altogether was vnknowne:
Yet ſilently admiring that fore-ſight,
Which he new came from more than human light
His mantle throwes, which whiles he walkt aſide
She taking vp, about hir ſhoulders tyed:
Then to him came: he at hir feet adores,
And benediction with teers implores:
She no leſſe humbled, proſtrat alſo lyes,
And craues that which he both craues, and denyes,
So whiles they for each other's bleſſing ſtriue,
Both want what both would haue, but neyther giue:
At laſt, th Egiptian thus hir ſute renewes,
And with freſh wonders his aſſent purſues:

Father,

Father, denye not to a wretch that grace,
Which is moſt proper to your years and place,
Your ſanctitye and habit: your pure hand
Which dayly toucheth, and hath at command
Our God and maker, is it ſelf thereby
Moſt blest: and's bleſſing ſhould to none denye.
Zozim abasht', replyes with ſobs and tears,
Moſt blessed mother, ah it wel appears
That nothing from your knowledge is conceald,
To whom (in ſpirit) theſe things are reueald,
Happy whoſe better part to this world dead
Is to the boſom of it's maker fled,
Where your pure ſoule in his bright eye diſcouers
Thoſe ſecrets, which are onely giuen to louers:
O ſince our merits are not iugd' by place,
But by the guifts of his effectual grace,
Let not your ſanctity diſdaine to bleſſe
Our more in dignity, in goodneſſe leſſe.
The Father thus importunately prayed:
She with compaſſion moud' kneeld vp, and ſayd:
Blessed be God, who ſaues the ſoules of men:
Then roſe: and *Zozim* riſing, cryed Amen.
Father (ſaith she) loe, you haue found at laſt
After much toyle, and many labours paſt,
A moſt infortunate creature, and one,
Whoſe litle goodneſſe had you ſooner knowne,
You would not with ſuch earneſt zeale haue ſought,
Nor a poore ſinner's ſight ſo dearly bought:
Yet ſince I thinke you onely were deſignd'
By heauens high will, theſe ſilent shades to find,

T'impart

T'impart ſome pious help, which wel I know,
Your charitable hand is ſent to doe
About this wretched carcaſſe: pray, relate,
How things are ſwayd' abroad, ſay in what ſtate
Th'affaires of Emperours and Chriſtians are?
How th'holy church, and our brethren fare?
He anſwer made: our mother church long toſt
With Arrîan ſtormes, long by bad princes croſt,
At laſt inioyes a calme of wished peace,
Whiles hereſyes and ciuil tumults ceaſe,
Through your good prayers: wherefore let me craue
Some part in them, ſince they ſuch power haue:
Oh if directed by the powérs aboue
I hither came, nor my poore preſence moue
Your ſoule, to iuſt contempt: be pleaſd' to pray
For me ſtaind' ſinner, that this tedious way
May not be wholy fruitleſſe, which I tread,
Ready to make my paſſage to the dead,
Pray for the churche, whole world, and for me craue
That I may part ſecurely to my graue.
Father ſayd she: not I: a ſinful wretch,
But you your purer hands to heauen should ſtretch,
For al diſtreſſed ſoules: this as our due,
We from your orders challenge, and from you:
Yet ſince obedience bids me to fulfil
Not what I think moſt fit, but what you wil,
Loe, I obay; this ſayd: she humbly folds
Her much-worne knees, hir naked hands she holds
Stretcht at their ful length, to the Orient skye,
Her ſoule euen ſwimming in her fixëd eye:

Silent she prayes, the cauſe her tears muſt gaigne,
Dumb oratours which neuer pleade in vain,
Vneuitable charmes, al-forcing ſtreames,
Which heauen delighting in, with powêrful beames
Attracts vnto it ſelf, and with ſuch force,
As euen the compound of hir heauier corſe
Followes her melting ſoule, and fixt remaines,
Betwixt heauen's bright arche, and earth's ſpatious plaines:
Whiles it more light the whirling orbes tranſcends,
And to the boſom of it's maker tends.
Zozim thewhile admiring that high grace,
And feruour, which appeared in her face:
Now loſt in wonder, to the low earth ſinkes,
And at his owne lamented coldneſſe ſhrinkes:
Thumps his bare breaſt, and as he groueling lyes,
Deplores his owne ſinnes, and for mercy cryes:
When loe the flye-fiend prompts him, that this might
Be ſome illuſion, ſome infernal ſpright,
And ſtickes not wrongfully himſelf t'accuſe,
(Who iuſtly would not) th'old man to abuſe:
Poore man he doubts, and whiles he feares deceat,
Is coſend': Satan ſmiling at his cheate.
When she, whoſe ſoule had ſtrayd' aboue the ſphæres,
Retourning to her place perceaud' his feares
Through the clear glaſſe of that eternal light,
Through which al ſee, but ſee not with ſuch ſight:
Father, ſayth ſhe: what troubled thought is this?
Which makes you iudge of me, and iudge amiſſe,
As though I onely made à showe to pray,
A ſtumbling-blocke of ſcandal in your way:

I am

I am no ſpirit: but true flesh and blood,
Once white as ſnow, washt in th'al-clenſing flood
Of holy baptiſme: now as blacke as shame
And ſin can dye an euer-tainted fame:
Here-with her forhead, eyes, her lips, and breſt,
Signing them with a reddy hand she bleſt:
Saying, o father, may our lord preſerue
Al theſe poore ſoules, which him would trulye ſerue,
From Satan and his sleights. Whoſe hopeleſſe ſtate
Doth not a little grudge our better fate.
He falling at her feet, his owne breaſt beates,
And her whole life's relation thus intreates:
Bleſt ſaint: whoſe ſoule from worldly noyſe deuided,
Is in this wilderneſſe by angels guided,
Euen for his ſake, who for our ſakes was borne
Of virgin's ſpotleſſe wombe, whom raggd and torne
The Angels in mount Calûrye ſaw amazd':
And on his wounds with admiration gazd':
For his dear ſake I ſay: for whom thou bearſt'
Theſe markes of pennance, for whoſe loue thou wearſt'
This glorious nakedneſſe: oh let me know
What, whence, thou art, and how long tis agoe,
Since firſt thou hither cameſt, a heauenly gheſt,
Leauing the world impou'risht of it's beſt:
Oh ſay: and nothing in darke ſilence fold,
Which to God's holy honour may be told.
For this (it ſeemes) this tedious life of mine
Hath been prolongd' by prouidence diuine,
For this, directed by a heauenly voyce,
I left my natiue celle, and former choyce,

My ſelf alone in theſe darke caues deſignd,
The rareſt wonder of this age to find:
And wil you (ah too nice) thoſe great workes hide?
Which God himſelf (it ſeemes) would haue diſcryed:
High graces oft to priuat ſoules are lent,
But to a genêral good their vſe is ment,
Theſe by concealing, you'l vſurpe a due,
We muſt aſcribe to heauen, and not to you.
The holy penitent with tears, begins
To cal to memory her former ſinnes:
Then ſighing, ſpoke: behold, my vnfaind griefe
And blushing eyes bewray my guilty life,
Though my grieud' ſoule paint in this outward showe
Thoſe ſoares, which on it like foule leapers growe,
Since you my naked out ſide did behold,
I shal with like ſimplicitye vnfold
A blacker inſide, and ſuch ſins, I fear,
You'l flye me as ſome fiend, when them you hear:
Firſt praying you, inceſſantly to pray,
That in the laſt of dayes, that dreadful day
To guilty ſoules, when heauen and earth combind
Shal ſtand againſt vs, I may mercy find.
With teares he onely anſwrîng: she purſues
And adding tears to tears, hir grief renewes.
Borne, where the fruitful *Nile* oreflows the land,
And leaues it mannurd' to the farmers hand,
At twelue years age cloggd' with the tender loue
And care of mine old parents, I remoue
To *Alexandria* that royal ſeate,
That farre-famd' litle world, that citty great,

That

That fatal rocke, on which much youth vnſtayd'
And many a lady's honour ſhipwrack made,
Who now with me, may curſe that il-famd' coaſt
On which our better names we fondly loſt,
I blush to ſpeake my firſt fault, and to tell,
How from the ſtate of innocence I fell,
Nor think it fit, your chaſter eare to wound
With the moſt horrid and deteſted ſound,
Of my vnſatiably bad deſires:
No flame can match them but hel's natiue fyêrs:
Let this ſuffice, ful ſeuenteen years, and more,
I in that citty liud' a common whore,
Neyther did I at firſt mine honour graunt
Tempted with gold, or ouercome with want:
Nor ſince through aûarice haue I welterd in
Th' vn bridled rage of this deteſted ſin,
But drownd' in damnëd luſts, I held the vice
Reward ſufficiënt, and its owne price,
Where by to ſin, and craft in ſin, inurd',
More cuſtomers I wickedly allurd,
Liuing vpon my needle bare and poore,
Whiles forct' to beg my bread from dore to dore:
Curſt wretch the mouthes of Orphans to defraud,
And who firſt made bleſt pouerty a bawde,
Which rather then the charges ſhould diſtaſte
My wicked mates, I willingly imbrac't:
Thus long I ſayld on deepe damnation's ſeas,
Whiles onely luſt my luſtful ſoule could pleaſe,
Yet ſtil vnſatisfyêd, and neuer tyrd'

The more I ſind , the more to ſin deſired,
When one day, walking on the ſandes, I ſpyed
Great multitudes thronging to this ſea-ſide,
Bound for the holy land : the feaſt drew near
Of th' holy roode, and theſe al pilgrims were:
With them ſome toye, or rather ſome bad fiend
Tooke me to ioyne: I cald to one : my friend,
Pray tel me, is there roome aboard to ſpare,
Enough he anſwerd, paying for your fare:
Tush, with foule geſtures, ſayd I : here's as good,
Making my fouler meaning vnderſtood.
Pardon me holy father, for I wrong
Your chaſter eare, detayning it ſo long
On theſe blacke ſins, which whiles I here declare,
My baneful breath infects the purer ayre:
And heauen knowes with what horrors I relate
Th'abominations of my former ſtate:
Mother, ſayd he, let not this clowde of shame
Obſcure the glory due to his great name,
Whoſe power and grace ſuch crymes can onely clear,
And no where more then in our ſins appear.
Then she continued thus: vpon the ſand
Ready to boate I ſawe an able band
Of tall yong men, 'mongſt whom I rushing in,
With frontleſſe impudence did thus begin:
Haue with you gallants, where ſo êre y'are bound,
And thinke not that of me (ſirs) you haue found
A thankleſſe wretch, for truely you shal ſee,
That I am open hearted, kind and free:
My ſtrange immodeſty their laughter moues,

They

They al profeſſe, and I accept their loues:
With ſuch lewd ſpeeches, and much worſe then theſe,
I woed thoſe youths, and with them tooke the ſeas,
Hoping, if euer, in ſuch choyce to find
Pleaſure, as ample as my boundleſſe mind.
Now o thou man of God how can I tell
Thoſe ſins, fit onely to be knowne in Hell,
No mortal tongue can ſpeake, no godly eare
Can without horror, their relation hear:
Yet this Ile ſay: what art, or luſt could doe,
What fiends could tempt the worſt of creatures to,
I there came guilty of: which when I now
Recall to memorye, I wonder, how
Thoſe ſwelling tydes were not allowd' to ſweep
My ſinful ſoule to th'euer-laſting deep:
Ah no! whiles I euen in ſins ocean liud'
That shoare-leſſe mercy my poore ſoule repriud':
That long-forbearing God, who would haue none
To perish, calmd' from his eternal throne
The fury of the ſea, and angry wind,
Againſt their maker's enemye combind.
At laſt we landed on the Syrian shoare:
I ſtil the ſame, taled on my hellish ſcore,
For al that iourney, as by land we went,
My malice on the wreak of ſoules was bent,
Not onely ſinning with my long-knowne band,
But tempting many natiues of the land,
And euen to them, who for deuotion came,
Shame-leſſe to all made proffer of my shame.
Now O, the very thought for iudgement calles

Of thoſe ſinnes, which within the holy walles
I durſt commit, euen where a crimſon flood
Had washt the ſtreets with my wrongd' ſauiours blood:
Where not one ſoule ſo bad, as had the force
To viewe thoſe places, without ſome remorſe,
My diuelish ſelf excepted: dare I ſay
That on the Eeue of that al-honourd' day,
Nay euen the day of th'exaltation: I
(When euery one repented, euery eye
Was turnd to heauen) contriud' the while to winne
As many partners, as I could, to ſinne.
Pardon my shame ſir if too faſt I run
From this foule Hell, to the more gratious Sun
Of my conuerſion: no wordes can expreſſe
My ſinnes, the mercyes of my God, much leſſe.
Bright was the morne, and Tythons loue, graye-eyed,
Her pureſt skye in purpled ſtreames had dyde,
The golden Sun, which then appeard before
I'ts vſual time, ran poaſting to adore
The euer-honourd croſſe: dumb things declard'
Their ioye by ſignes, and for the feaſt prepard':
Noe ſoule, in which the fouleſt ſinnes had ſwarmd',
But then came with remorce and pennance armd',
I who that ſacrament of grace abhord',
More than the iuſt edge of heauen's angry ſwôrd,
Neuer more bold in ſin, more hard in heart,
Came in this feaſt to act my hellish part,
Where with coye lookes, and wanton words, in vaine,
I labourd ſome vnhappy ſoule to gaigne,
Thus wicked both in action and intent

I with

I with the people to the temple went.
A building of ſuch glory, ſtate, and coſt,
Mine eyes in it's vnmeaſurd' hugeneſſe loſt,
Could not but vnder-prize thoſe antique frames,
Wherewith our *Ægypt* it's leſſe wonders fames:
The skye-crownd roofe (which in the midſt no art
Could ioyne) the holy Sepulchre, and part
Of Caluary, includes in th'oual round
Of it's extended circuit, vaſt, profound;
I'ts out ſide (sheetes of braſſe) with fyerye ſtreames
Blinds curious eyes from Sols' retorted beames:
White marble-columnes ſeuenty three, vphold
The inſide, archt, and parietted with gold:
Each pillars baſe and cornish cut, and wrought
In curious imagery, the tranſomes fraught
With counterfaits of ſaintes, ſuch as old time
Hath moſt eſteemd of, in the churches prime:
Gallerd aboue, the walles and arches creſted,
Twice-guilt, and with choyce floritrye inueſted:
Party-colourd marble laid checkerwiſe,
In varyed heawes the polisht flooer dyes:
The windoors equal to the roofe in height,
Through the whole fabricke ſpreade a gladſom light,
Whereof each one ſupported with three rowes
Of marble pillars, like t'a temple showes:
Between each ranke with running tranſomes croſt
Fretted with gold, and curiouſly imboſt:
The outſide of the wall, (where wall there was,
For ſome might think it had no wall but glaſſe)
Had round about, with-in it's hollow pents

The glittring ſtatues of a thouſand ſaintes,
With ſuch rare art, in the pure marble carud',
The workmanship alone for wonder ſerud'.
Such is this ſumptuous temple: than the which,
The world hath none more greate, more famd', more rich,
The worke of Roman *Hellen*: hauing viewd'
This goodly building, boldly I intrude,
Borne with the tide of the in-preaſing crowde,
Which like the oceans ſwelling billowe flowd',
To th'entry of the church: foole that I was!
To think ſuch ſins could through that portal paſſe,
The double gate within it's brazen leaues,
Without reſiſtance, the whole preſſe receaues,
Where I in impudency onely ſtrong,
Thought to haue paſt with the more pious throng:
But as the crowde had ſwayd' me to the gate,
I ſtil was driuen backe, by ſome hidden fate:
Thouſands I ſawe, which paſt on euerye ſide,
Entrance to none, but to my ſelf, denyed:
Toucht with amazement, not yet with remorſe,
Againe I forward preaſt with greater force:
Againe that vnſeen angry arme, I feele,
And forc't backe with a greater force, I reele:
Euen they, who in the ſtreame next to me were,
Paſt freely through the gates, and left me there:
Thrice thus enraged, through the throng I brake,
Thrice, in the ſame ſort, I was beaten backe:
At laſt perplext in mind, in body tyrd',
Confuſd' with ſhame, and wonder, I retyrd'.

Faint

Faint I ſate downe, and eying th'open gate,
Thus fretted to my ſelf: what ſullen fate
Reſiſts my entry? and with broad diſgrace
Excludes me onely from this hallowêd place?
O, in this world of people is there none?
With as great ſinnes, although perhaps, leſſe known
Than mine are, which haue entred: if there bee?
Why am I onely plagud', al others free?
Here wrath and indignatiön inflame
My vndiſcerning ſoule, with angry shame:
Blind that I was, who in this frantick moode,
Could not diſcrye the firſt ſpring of my good:
But tamer reaſon calming this hot brunt,
Summons my paſt life to a ſtrict account,
Forcing my much-rakt' memory t'vnſcroule
My too-long-folded ſinnes, a fatal roale:
My ſeeing ſoule with ghaſtlye terrours faintes,
Chill horrour in deaths paleſt colours paints
Diſmaydneſſe in my face, hel in my thought,
And al the torments wherewith hel is fraught.
Here grace began it's powêrful beames to shed,
Which in my ſoule, remorſe and ſorrow bred:
Thoſe hydeous ſinnes which earſt but paſtimes were,
Through this new light, in their true forme appear,
Such, as their greatneſſe none elſe can conceiue,
Nor others better-minded, would beleeue,
That euer ſuch ſinnes were: ſinnes which the earth
Were guiltleſſe of, had it not giuen me birth,
A greater monſter than the which, til now

It neuer teemd', nor after this shal doe:
Fear of eternitye, and hel's blacke shades,
With horrours neare my fainting ſoule inuades,
That cunning fiend', which hitherto had ſoothd'
My ſinful diſpoſition, and had ſmoothd'
The harsh way of damnation, now appears
In his owne hideous shape, augments my feares,
Makes my ſins greater, then indeed they are,
For none ſo great as ought to cauſe diſpaire,
Elſe infinitely bad, we might ſinne more,
Than Gods moſt infinite goodneſſe could reſtore,
O father, how the griefe of what had paſt,
And fear of torments, which for euer laſt,
Rent my ſad heart, where in deſpaire tooke place,
Striuing to dimme that litle beame of grace,
Through which my ſoule already did begin
To ſee, and hate the fouleneſſe of it's ſin:
When loe on each ſide troubled, and diſtreſt,
That ſelf-ſame grace my weeping eye addreſt
T'a goodly image, heawd' in parian ſtone:
The virgin mother, with her litlë one,
Folded in her pure armes: ſuch as the light
Of the twin-ſtarre, shewes in a ſtormy night
To hope-leſſe ſaylers, ſuch appeatd' this phare
To my ſoule, running th' hazard of deſpaire:
With humbled head, and much more humbled heart
I kneele, and kneeling, thus my woes impart:
Moſt bleſſed virgin, farre more bleſſed mother
O euer bleſt in both, aboue al other,
Although I know, how il, ſo dire a wretch

May her polluted hands for fauour ſtretch,
How il I may preſume to looke for grace,
From thy deſeruedly auerted face,
Since hel more oppoſite can nothing find,
To the eternal purity of thy mind,
Then this confuſed chaös of al crimes,
Slaue to her luſtes, and monſter of theſe times:
I know ſo ſtaind a ſoule should not expect,
Other, from thee, than hatred, and neglect,
Yet ſince it pleaſd' that litle ſon of thine,
That mighty God, that power al-diuine,
For ſo deſpiſd'a wretch, himſelf t'expoſe
To al our miſeryês, and diſaſtrous woes;
Mother of mercy, b'it not ſayd, that thou
Didſt' ere reiect, an humbled ſinner's vow:
Obtaine for me (what can that ſon refuſe
For which ſo dearly loud' a mother ſues)
That I poore ſinner, though a worth-leſſe gheſt,
Yet may aſſiſt at this al-honourd' feaſt,
And proſtrat, with true ſorrow, may adore
The markes of his dear wounds, and ſacred goare:
Thou ſpot-leſſe virgin, which art euer bent
To ſuccour ſuch, as truely would repent:
Loe here I vow, and from this howêr begin
To hate, and fly al pathes, which leade to ſin:
Be thou my ſuërty (who can alleadge
To thy great ſon a more accepted pledge)
As ſoone as entred I shal haue adord'
His holy croſſe, and his great name implord'

My ſelf from worldly ioyes I wil retyre,
Both truely in effect, and in deſire:
Be thou my guide, and gratiouſly impart
Comfort, and help: for thou my ſuerty art.
Thus hauing prayd: not rashly, confident,
Vnder ſo great a patroneſſe I went,
And where the meeting throngs of ſuch as enterd,
Shock't with the iſſûers forth, I feareleſſe venterd:
Oh father, hear, and wonder: haue you ſeen
The iuſtling waues on Neptune's foaming green?
When windes and tides, at variance, ſtrongly plea
For empire, on the billow-breaking ſea:
No otherwiſe, the floating multitudes
Shouldring each other in oppoſed crowdes,
In ſtreames vncertain yet, waue too and fro
Whiles ſome roale backwards others forward flowe,
Theſe comming on euen at the portal fayle,
Now th'out commers, th'incommers now preuayle:
My ſelf, like to a bowe-shot arrow flew,
And borne with equal ſpeed, through eyther crow
(Which way or how I paſt I can not tell)
Proſtrat before the ſigne of triumph fel.
Here feare and horrour, ſpringing from the tyde
Of ouer-flowing ioye, my ſoule deuide,
Guilty of it's owne ſins: a flood of teares,
Badges of inward ſorrow, drowne my feares
In ſeas of true content: no ioye hath life
Compard' to this ſad ioye, this ioye-ful griefe:
Hence, ſprings true hatred of my former ſins,
Hence, heauenly loue with better hopes begins

To ſpreade pure flames, and my beſt part inſpires,
O that a ſtreame of tears should rayſe ſuch fyers!
The marbled flooër groueling I embrac't,
And cleanſd' the checkerd flags with kiſſes chaſt,
Then crawling on, and kneeling at the foote
Of th'holy croſſe, I bathd' it's ſacred roote
With flowing tears, and empty hoales adord'
Yet with the blood of my redeemer goard':
Oh what a full content, what ſeas of bliſſe
My ſoule ſwam in! loſt in the vaſt abyſſe
Of that vnmeaſurd' loue, which for our good
Left theſe ſad markes, of his much-waſted blood:
Vnworthy I, my ſexes shame, the worſt
Of Ægipt's monſters, and the moſt accurſt,
Led by ſo great a patroneſſe, was free
To kiſſe the foote, of his blood-honourd tree,
And through her fauour made my guilty eyes
Partakers of it's glorious miſteryes:
And oh ſuch ſweetneſſe there, ſuch odours felt,
As none can gheſſe, the ſame who haue not ſmelt
A heauenly ſent: the like, no flowrye field,
Perfumd' panchaia, nor Sabæa, yeeld:
My harder hart now in warme tears diſtilles,
And inward comfort my whole ſenſes thrilles
O may al ſuch as are oppreſt in mind,
The like relief in true repentance find.
The brazen gates no ſooner had I paſt,
When my whole burden on the green I caſt,
Before the image, where I firſt had prayd,

And mindful of my former promiſe, ſayd:
Mother of God, who doeſt to none refuſe
Mercy, vnleſſe thy mercyes they abuſe,
Through thee I haue this glorious ſight obtaind,
Not with a wicked eye to be prophand,
Through thee I le glorifye my God, who ſaues
The ſinner, which through thee his mercy craues:
What can a wretch ſay more? or more requyre?
Hauing from thee obtaind her hearts deſire:
T'is now my turne: bleſt virgin: here I ſtand;
Ready t'obſerue my vow, and thy command,
O teach me heauen's path, yet vnknowne, to tread,
And in the way of truth, thy pupil leade.
This ſaid: as I was riſing from my prayêr,
A heauenly voice came through the open ayre,
Flye to the deſart: there, ſad ſoule repent,
Beyond the Iordan: there find true content.
My trembling knees on earth againe I fold,
And out-ſtretcht hands to heauen's bright arches hold,
Alme virgin, loe, here once more, I abiure.
The world and ſin: thou which art euer pure,
Mother, and mayd: if gladly all I leaue,
And naked, to thy dear protection cleaue,
If readily I follow thy command,
O doe not thou with-draw thy helping hand,
But thy poore creature guide, preſerue, defend,
Til in thy ſon, my ſelfe and vowes both end:
Here-with I roſe: as I departed thence,
Some charitable man ſtopt three ſmal pence
In to my hand: with which in haſt I bought

Three penny loafes, and by the baker taught
The way, to Iordan which I was to take,
With teares the holy citty I forſake.
The fayling ſun, yet, with a ruddy light
I could ſee glimring on mount Carmel's height,
When to a litle chappel of St. Ihon,
Ihon, holy Zachary'es more holy ſon,
Weary and weake I came: this chappel ſtood
Vpon the bankes of the deſired flood,
There, as the ſun euen hid his ſea-drencht beames,
Handes, face, and feet, I waſhe in liuing ſtreames:
The night I ſpend in prayer, and with teares
Reade the blacke legend of my ſinful yeares:
Preparing my ſtaind ſoule, with vnfaind griefe,
The next day, to receaue the foode of life.
Iuſt heauens be merciful: I know I went
Vnworthily to this great ſacrament,
O ſacred manna, fountaine of al good,
O deified bread, o angel's foode,
Hide me in thy eternal mercyes, from
The dreadful iuſtice of thy threatned doome:
Neuer ſicke ſoule preſumd' in houſe prophane,
So glorious o gheſt to entertaine:
But oh vnſearched treaſures! boundleſſe ſeas
Of mercyes and of goodneſſe! when I ceaſe
Thy mercyes and thy grace to magnifie,
O let me without grace and mercy dye:
Neuer ſicke ſoule, ſo lame, and impotent,
So full of horrours, which durſt yet preſent
I'ts naked inſide, to that heauenly gheſt,

Receaud' more comfort in this ſacred feaſt,
Than I poore ſinner : vndeſerued grace
Did neuer yet more amiably imbrace,
A leaprous ſoule, reſtord' with angel's foode,
And cleanſed with my God's al-clenſing blood:
The inward ioy, and ſpiritual delight,
The peace of mind, and comfortable light;
Which (liberâlly infuſed from aboue)
Fierd my ſoule with euerlaſting loue,
Were ſuch, as ſhould my wordes hope to deliuer,
My wordes would wrong the bounty of the giuer:
Alas how oft, to ſolitude confind',
Haue I ſince then, with holy hungar pind'
After this bleſſed food : how oft diſtreſt,
And with the weight of mine owne woes oppreſt,
Haue I in agony, and hellish dread,
Sighed for the comfort of this heauenly bread:
How oft in bitterneſſe and drought of heart,
Haue I aſpird, but to ſome litle part,
Of this oreflowing grace, this taſt of heauen,
Now to a wretch ſo prodigally giuen:
Ah I deſerud' it not, my ſinnes were ſuch,
Rather what then I had, was too too much,
Yet he who knowes both when and how to giue,
Will, when h'is pleaſd', a famisht wretch relieue.
Oh father, might a ſinner euer pray
With ſuch full comfort, as I did that day,
How ſhould we beat our ſin's deſerued paine,
Without which heauenly ioyes are hopd' in vaine:
But I the time, in mine owne paſſions ſpend,

Wronging

Wronging your eare, which craues my ſtory's end,
Yet as you ſee I can not wel let paſſe
This pleaſing memory ſo then I was
No leſſe vnwilling to forſake the place,
Wherein vnworthy, I receaud' ſuch grace.
From hence, about high noone, though loth I part,
More ſtrong, more comforted, and light of heârt,
Then euer I had been: prone on the bankes
Of ſiluer Iordan, I yeeld humbleſt thankes
To my great miſtriſſe, for I muſt to her
All fauours what ſo ere and guifts referre,
Her ſon at her intreatye shal beſtowe,
For al through her that's giuen, to her I owe:
With tears I craue that she vouch ſafe t'abate
My God's iuſt wrath, whom in ſuch wretched ſtate,
I had preſumd', vnworthy, to receîue,
That he my faulty rashneſſe would forgiue,
Then in his late-tryêd mercyes confident,
My ſelf and all t'his heauenly will preſent.
My prayer ended: on the tufted graſſe
Earth's natif Carpet, halfe a loafe I place,
And ſitting downe on Iordan's flowry bed,
Prayſing th almighty's name, I eate my bread:
My hirſt I quench in the vndamagd' flood,
For what I tooke in drinke, my tears made good,
Contented with this ſober fare I riſe,
And to the orient skye couuert mine eyes,
Giuing all thanks to him, who to all giues,
And with due foode his creatures relieues:
That eue, and moſt part of that night, I ſpent

In prayêr : the reſt to careful ſlumbers lent:
Early next morning, ere the riſing ſun
Had from the eaſt his dayly courſe begun,
Watchful I riſe my knees and heart I bowe,
Weepe, and reiterate my former vow,
And hauing to the glorious virgin prayd
More earneſtly then euer, for her ayd
In al my actions, til my ſoule inlargd
From mortal fetters, had it's vowes diſchargd,
With conſtant purpoſe, neuer to forſake
The courſe, by her addreſſe I was to take,
Strait boating ouer the ſaint honourd flood,
I hid me in this vnfrequented wood:
From which time, euer flying, I haue fled,
And this vaſt deſart's depth inhabited,
Expecting him with loue and fear, who ſaues
The humbled ſinner, which, his mercy craues.
Here she concluded: he, whoſe rauisht ears
Had ſeemd tranſported to th'harmonial ſperes,
Whiles she ſpake ſweeter muſicke, now diſpleaſd
Thoſe accents of her heauenly voyce were ceaſd,
Hoping a while, that of her ſelf, she would
Some other paſſage of her life haue told,
Stood mute: but ſilent shame, with downe-caſt eies
Her aaged face in virtue's colour dyes,
At things her ſelf had ſayd: this he perceaues:
And thus with wordes, her of newe words deceaues:
How long (o ſainted ſinner) is it ſince
Theſe woods their firſt bliſſe borrôwed, from thy ſinnes.
Forty ſeuen times; ſayd she, the golden ſun

Through

Through the twelue ſignes it's compleate race hath run
For ſo oft haue I markt theſe trees left bare,
And their rich out-ſides nipt by th' colder ayre.
As oft, (if this we reckon) haue I ſeen
The fragrant ſpring reſtore their natiue green,
Since Sions holy citty I forſooke,
And pennance in this deſart vndertoke.
Zozim againe; how haue you liud' ſince then,
Whither relieud' by angels, or by men?
Haue you in peace and without ſtrife attaind
To this perfection's height, vnſtopt, vnſtraind:
Or haue you felt the ciuil violence
Of lawleſſe paſſions? reaſon againſt ſence,
Will oppoſite to will, and rebell nature
In armes, againſt the lawes of it's creatour:
Hath not that common foe, whoſe ſubtle ſleight
Some times tranſformes him to an angel bright,
Some times puts on the hydeous shape of feare,
With this t'amaze, with that the eyes to blear
Of weaker ſoules: with cunning and with force
Oppoſd' you in this ſolitary courſe?
For with ſuch trickes it euer was his vſe
The deſart's late improouers to ſeduce.
Th Ægiptian ſighes, who in the fearfulſt kind,
Had ſtood the vtmoſt fury of the fiend,
Yet loath thoſe fatal conflicts to renewe,
From which she doubts freſh dangers might enſue,
Pale at their memory, and willing to
Forget thus ſleights, what he deſird' to know:

Tenta-

Tentations I had many, and thoſe ſuch,
I can not ſay too litle, may too much.
Their memory is horrour, and may yet
Freed danger, who is ſafe whom foes beſet:
But for my foode! o ſtay, here, Zozim cryed,
With this halfe-anſwer not to be denyed,
For thinking it the will of heauen, he should
Her wondrous life to after-times vnfold',
He would haue al: ah whither is't you run
From that which you should moſt inſiſt vpon?
Weake of your ſelf, if through heauen's ayding pôwrs
You haue preuayld, the glory is not yours:
Secrets of kings w'are warned to conceal,
But gloriôus t'is God's wonders to reueale.
The ſun-burnd' ſaint (her eyes glazd' with fresh tears)
Made anſwer: for the ſpace of ſeuenteen years,
Or there abouts, when to the ſilent shade
Of gloomy woods, my firſt retreat I made,
The raging monſters of vntamd' deſyers
The light-wingd' furyes of my former fyers
Waſp-like, innumerous and buſy ſwarmes,
Frighted my reſtleſſe ſoule with dire alarmes,
They roamd', they ragd', by day, by night obſcure,
No time, no place, my prayers were ſecure:
Hot meates, where in our Ægipt much exceeds,
And bodyes plumpt to ſinful pleaſures feeds,
Now repreſent themſelues with al the ſtore
Of law-leſſe cates, which I had vſd' before,
Tempting with an vnwilling, forc't delight,
My ſtil in-vaine-reſiſting appetite;

My

My blood-leſſe vaines with ſtrong wines ſeemt to ſwell
Which I was wont to quaffe, as deepe as Hell
In ſinful healths : laſciuious tunes deterre
My euen vnwillingly attentiue eare,
Whiles my too buſy, and vnheed-ful tongue
Hummes the leaud parcels of ſome wanton ſong
To theſe both tears, and prayers, I oppoſe,
Batter my guilty breaſt with trebled blowes,
Implore the ayde of my great patroneſſe
Whoſe ſuccour neuer fayld me in diſtreſſe,
For as it were euen kneeling in the place
Where firſt I ſaw her image, my ſad caſe
With tears I would expoſe: o happy they
Who to the mother of al mercy fly,
For whiles tears from mine eyes flowd, in ful ſtreames,
A heauenly light diffuſd in glorious beames
Would round incircle me ſecure my fears,
And change thoſe ſtreams of ſorrows to glad tears:
But oh the ſnares, the vnreſiſted charmes,
The fierce aſſaults, th'vneuitable armes;
Wherewith foule luſt, and actions vnnamd,
Ay me! my too proone memory inflamd,
When all thoſe wanton prancks of loue, which I
In former times had acted willingly,
Preſented now to my vnwilling mind,
Eache one, it's ſeueral face, it's ſeueral kind:
Then millions of chymera-like delights
Would throng in, with vn heard of appetites,
And all luſt's varyed shapes : a hydeous shoale,
None can paint ſin but to a ſinful ſoule:

Thrice

Thrice happy ye, whoſe purer minds not know
Thoſe tortures, which our ſins are ſubiect to,
Who in your ſtate of innocence, ſecure,
Dreame not, what our (once guilty) ſoules indure:
Mine yet with horrour faints, euen at the thought,
Mindful, how weakely thus aſſayld, it fought:
No flaxe, no ſulphur, ſpreads more readily
The nimble flame, which heedleſſe hands applye,
Then my prone ſenſes, through ſin's former vſe,
Like lightning, theſe impoyſond thoughts diffuſe,
My forc't will it's aſſent in vaine denyes,
My ſoule melts in the flame, my marrow fryes,
I weepe, when vrgd' with theſe inragd' deſires,
But o no ſea of tears can quench ſuch fyers.
My boyling limmes I ſpread on the cold' ground,
Mine eyes and face in flowing ſorrow drownd',
Thus in the pangs of mortal agonye,
Whole dayes, whole nights oftime, I grouelinglye,
Inuoking ful of truſt, her virgin ayde,
Which neuer fayld' me, though ſome times delayd,
For from the duſt I neuer rear my face,
(Vext with ſuch thoughts) til that clear beame of grace
It's light of comfortable ſweetneſſe sheds,
And round about me glorious brightneſſe ſpreads.
For then the enemy retyers diſmayd,
Hot flames, and luſt's abhord' ſuggeſtions vade:
So when foule miſts clogge Iordans ſiluer flood,
The ſun, cleard from ſome interpoſed cloud,
The foggy dampe diſperſes: and diſplayes
On the reflecting waues his brighteſt rayes.

Full

Full ſeuenteen years thus I afflicted liued',
Inuaded by the foe, by her relieud',
So long when I had ſpent that little bread
Where of I ſpake, on herbes and rootes I fed,
Experience inſtructing me to chuſe
Such as the woods afforded, beſt for vſe:
So long: through th'alterd ſeaſons of the year,
I ſufferd much from the diſtemperd ſphere,
In depth of winter, with cold mornings glac't,
With ſnowes, with ſleetes, and ſtormes of hayle defac't,
In ſummer tand', and ſcorcht with Titans beames,
My nakedneſſe expoſd' to both extreames,
For thoſe sheere weedes the moyſt and bleaker ayre
Had quickly rotted, which at firſt I ware:
From which time forward; naked as you ſee,
From ſoultry heate, from blashing winters free,
Clad in the mercyes of my God, in prayſe
Of his bleſt name, I ſpend my waining dayes:
My ſoule which in theſe caues, heauen ayding, through
A thouſand ſnares, hath kept it's former vow,
Not ignorant, with what high fauours grac't,
Innumerable hazards it hath paſt,
And truſting to that grace, by which repriud'
From theſe exteriour troubles, it hath liud',
Growes confident: and with inflamd' deſires,
To euer-laſting comforts glad aſpyres:
I drinke, I feed, I'm clothd' out of heaûens ſtore,
The word' of God all theſe ſupplyes, and more,
Becauſe that man on bread not onely feeds,
But on each word which from our Lord proceeds,

Nay euen the very rocke shal them arraye,
Who the foule robe of sin haue thrown away.
Th'attentiue father, when she had annext
These places, pickt' out of the sacred text,
Demanded if she had been some times bred
In studyes, or the psalmes perhaps had read:
Noe truly said she, nor haue seen the face
Of mortal creature, in this forlorne place:
But be not this your wonder: for Gods word
Doth sence and science to all his afford:
Loe father, now my whole life's tract you haue,
And once againe vpon my knees I craue,
That in those holy offrings which you make
Dayly to heauen, you some compassion take
Of my much-burdend' soule, and recommend
To that great God of mercyes my neere end:
A deepe-fetcht sigh here closd' her speech: the man
Confounded kneeld', and with loud voyce began,
His eyes in warme tears swimming: Blessed be
That God, by whom great things we compast see,
Strange high and wonderful, most dreadful things
Things which no scypher within number brings,
Blessed art thou, Lord, God almighty, who
Art pleasd' that I a sinful wretch should know
All those good things, which thou reseru'st in store
For them that loue thee, who doest euermore
Help them who seeke thee: there th'Ægiptian takes
The oldman's hand, and raysing him thus speakes:
Whiles I am liuing let no mortal ear
(O man of God) what I haue told thee heare,

Touching

Touching my life and ſtate: now go in peace,
And when the ſun shal this ſame dayes increaſe
Adde to the ful year's period, you me,
And I shal you, God's grace aſſiſting ſee,
Yet for Chriſt's ſake, let me intreat, that you
When the next lent shal theſe bleſt rites renew,
Though all the reſt their annual cuſtom keep,
In boating ouer Iordan's ſacred deep,
Yet paſſe not with them: Zozim marking her
His monaſteryes ſolemne rule t inferre,
With wonder shrinking, onely ſayd in's heart,
Glory to thee my God, who doeſt impart
To them who loue thee: she proceeded, ſtay
At home, as I was saying, nor obey
Thy rule here in, which wouldſt thou; know in vaine
Man ſtriues, when otherwiſe the heauens ordaine:
Then on that euer honourd' day, in which
It pleaſd' our lord his people to inrich
With the vnualued treaſure of his blood,
And ſacred body that life-giuing food,
Which, as his lou'es eternal teſtament,
By his laſt will; in this great ſacrament
He left to his beloued: then I ſay,
When the declining ſun shal cloſe the day,
Hauing with due ſolemnity renewd'
The ſacred cene doe not my hopes delude,
But part of that celeſtial foode reſerue,
The worſt of ſinners, and moſt poore to ſerue:
This don, expect me on the farther ſide,
Where Iordan's ſtreames the world and vs deuide,

That there once more I may receaue the blood,
And body of my God, which ſacred foode
My famisht ſoule (ſince thoſe bleſt ſtreams I paſt)
Hath not been worthy in theſe woods to taſt:
O father, though I know my ſelf the worſt
Of al that euer ſind, and moſt accurſt,
Yet doe not you a ſinners prayer ſlight,
For heauen it ſelf in ſuch oft takes delight,
Hear me, and graunt, that I vnworthy may
Receaue my God, about that time of day,
Wherein it pleaſd' himſelf to conſecrate,
And giue his laſt of ſuppers the firſt date,
Farher be mindful of me, and farewel:
One thing I had forgotten: pray you tell
Your Abbot *Iohn*: that ſome things are amiſſe
Which he should not neglect: but as for this
Say nothing for a while yet: tell him when
Our lord shal think it fit: forbear til then
Sh'had ſayd, and kneeld for's bleſſing, which obtaind
With winged ſpeed the thickeſt thickes she gaignd'.
The ayre receaues her on glad wings, the graſſe
Preſt lightly with her foot ſteps, as they paſſe
Forceth to riſe again (you'd ſay) to meet
I'ts happineſſe, and kiſſe her ſacred feet:
The woods haſte to incounter their loud'gheſt,
The leafes to whiſpering windes their ioys expreſt,
And ſpread a thicker shadow, for they know
It is her will, that they should hide her ſo:
Things without ſence exult, th'oldman alone,
Forſaken, and deiected, ſtands like one,

Whoſe high-contemplatiue tranſported ſoule
Wholy abſorpt, and fixt in th'vpper pole,
Reard on the wings of pure eternal loue,
Admire thoſe treaſures, which are ſtord' aboue
For true chaſte louers, and inioyes the place
Of endleſſe bliſſe: alas, one minut's ſpace
This high rayſd' ſoule, to it's frayle home retournes,
Where ſad, deiected, and oppreſt it mournes;
I'ts miſery the greater, by how much
The late-tryed ioyes of heauen it had found ſuch.
So ſtood the ſad anachoret, depriud'
Of that bleſt obiect, which had earſt reuiud'
His death-likeage, whiles euerye word of hers
Pierc't like ſweet muſick his attentiue ears,
Her countenance and illuminated face
Diffuſing part of that redounding grace,
Which through the working of the holy ghoſt,
His neighbouring ſoule with plenteous ſtreams ingroſt,
What ioy might with that ioy of his compare?
What myſery now equal his deſpaire,
Since paſt felicityes but vex the more,
Than if they neuer had been knowne before.
His eyes purſue the ſaint, as far as hee
Through the dimme glaſſes of thoſe eyes could ſee,
But when the ſpatious plaine, and woods thicke shade
His proſpect's vtmoſt period had made,
Loſt in himſelf, he without motion ſtood
His eyes and ſoule both ſinking in a flood
Of endleſſe teares innumerable woes

Oppreſſe him with their weight, and mortal throwes
His ſtraitned heart and bowels thrill: but when,
Weighing the varying ſtate of mortal men,
He had reflected on his griefe, and calld
The will of God to mind: himſelf appalld',
And fearful leaſt he had offended in
His too rash ſorrow, ſorrowes for his ſin,
And rectifying his inferiour will,
Vowes that of heauen in all things to fulfill;
Then kneeling kiſt the graſſe where she had ſtept,
Which with obſeruance dewe, yet careful kept
The prints of her dear feet: and with calme showers
Waterd the drooping graſſe, and late-bleſt flowers.
But time calles on him, and himſelf reſtraines
His too prone will, to dwel on thoſe ſad plaines
His hands with ſtreaming eyes to heauen he liftes,
And magnifying his maker in his guifts,
Who had diſcouerd that rich mine of grace
To him ſad ſinner, homewards twines his face:
Much pondring her ſtrict life, much her great merit,
But moſt the guift of that al-knowing ſpirit,
Which to her deiformed ſoule imparts
Thoughts hidden, and deepe folds of mortal harts.
T'was holy weeke: the fathers meet agen,
To celebrate at home their yearly cene:
Which hauing ſolemnizd' in open qûyer,
All ſilent, to their long-voyd celles retyre.
Zozim at leaſure here, begins to muſe
Vpon his late aduenture, and renewes.
The memory of al things, as they paſt,

Her

Her ſinnes, her age, ſtrict pennance, and long faſt:
Summons his ſenſes, chiefly eyes and ears,
(For their free paſſage full impreſſion bears
Both of her forme and wordes) to lend him ayde
Whiles his attentiue ſoule a briefe had made
Of all her wordes and graces: he the while,
At euêry tear of hirs, each litle ſmile,
Makes a full period, reuiewes her face,
Each lineament thereof, each heauenly grace,
And of theſe parcells frames one perfect whole,
Which he ingraues deepe, in his tender ſoule,
Nay now begins t'eſteeme, and much to make
Of his owne ſoule: euen for the model's ſake:
Pigmalion-like, but with a happyêr flame,
Doating vpon th'imaginary frame
Of his owne brayne: for wiſe, the whole referres
To that great workman, whoſe hand neuer erres,
Where it would goodneſſe paint, nor can his s'kill
Fayle him, whoſe pencil is his onely will:
Nor wondreth Zozim now, that libêrall heauen
Had ſuch perfections to a creâture giuen,
But mindful of the maker, learns to ſleight
The ſhallow and vnfinisht counterfeit,
Of that eternal prototype, which had
This rare piece to his owne reſemblance made,
Whoſe increäted beauty he admires,
And happy, burnes in more then mortal fyers.
Bleſt ſinner: whoſe ſole memory can moue
All creatures, to their great creators loue:
So powerfull is goodneſſe, to whoſe flame,

None

None can approach, but muſt burne with the ſame:
The beſt effect of friendship, which to none,
But ſaints, nor euen to theſe, is alwayes known:
Thrice happy was our Zozimas to chuſe
So bleſt a friend, but happyêr in the vſe
He made thereof : for as all things appear
More great in her, through fauour, then they were:
So through the glaſſe of pious hatred, he
His owne offences trebled ſeemes to ſee,
For by how much her worth he ouer-rates,
So much or more he of his owne abates:
Much he admires her life, her goodneſſe much,
But more himſelf blames, that hee is not ſuch:
Oh who not enuyes this his bleſſed ſtate,
Happy to merit both by loue and hate.
Hence he to ſuch ſupreme perfection growes,
That it, it-ſelf with admiration showes,
To the whole cloſter, whiles he onely blind,
Sees not that light, which in his owne ſoule shind
To th'eyes of al men: and though he conceale
The cauſe thereof, th'effects themſelues reueale
In euêrye act of his : nor reſt'es it here,
Too great, to be confind: the ſpatious ſpere
Of one man's ſoule, too ſmal to comprehend
So great a flame, is forc't it ſelf t'extend,
Dilating that reſiſtleſſe fyêr, which burnes
Al obiects near, and its owne ſubſtance turnes.
The conuent now, or rather, eûery celle
Might ſeeme a heauen, where bleſt ſaints onely dwell,
The elders marke with wonder-ſtrocken eyes

Such

Such reformation, without their aduice,
And with more dewe reſpects, learn to deferre
To him, whoſe good examples powêrful were
To make all others good: for none deſpairs
T'attaine to that perfection, which he shares:
The perfecteſt themſelus more perfect grow,
And now, by more than ſpeculation know,
That goodneſſe in a creature, hath no end,
Whence to a greater good it may not tend.
 Whiles thus a heauenly life on earth theyliue,
 And their thoughts wholy to perfection giue,
Their rauisht ſoules, fixt in a higher ſphere,
Marke not the alterd ſeaſons of the year,
Nor lower orbes, and euer poaſting ſun,
Which litle leſſe than his full race had run,
And by his abſence left the colder clyme
Stormd' once more with long froſts (ſo ſwiftly time.
Runs with the ſaints, and in deuotion ſpent)
Til warned now by near approaching lent,
And by long cuſtome taught they ready made
To paſſe the Iordan, to the gloomy shade
Of vnfrequented woods, the bleſt aboades
Of liuing ſaints, and long ſince beaten roades
By elder Hermits: whiles the reſt prepare
For their departure, Zozim's onely care
Caſts, how to keep touch with his ſaint-like friend,
Whom if he paſt the flood, he could not tend
As he had promiſt: gladly would doe both,
And to infringe their ſtatuts he is loth,

Nor would perhaps be ſufferd: this his doubt
A feauer clears, which ere the reſt went out,
Forc't him to lye, and at his bodye's coſt,
His mind from ſcruple freed: his iourney croſt:
Where now remembring, how she parting ſayd,
Whither he would or not, he should be ſtayd,
Taught by experience, her wordes beleeues:
And at his owne too ſlender faith much grieues:
Yet comforted in that he well-knowes, she
Who ſo long ſince this ſickneſſe could foreſee,
Would not forget to pray for him: remits
All to the will of heauen: ere long, his fittes
Not cauſd' by any naturall exceſſe,
But by the hand of God himſelf, grew leſſe,
And quickly left him free from al diſeaſe,
His mind and body both, in ſweeteſt peace,
Expecting that, not long-deferd' delight,
Which both were to partake in her bleſt ſight.
The wished daye breakes to his longing eyes,
He haſtes to that vnbloody ſacrifice,
Which glads the heauens, and earth, the quicke and dead,
And pixing part of that eternal bread,
Which mindful of his holy penitent,
He careful, had reſerud' to this intent:
Downe to the Iordan, ſwimming in glad tears,
His God and maker in his weake handes bears,
And full of hope, in the appointed place,
Expects to ſee her long-deſired face,
Much wondring, that she was not yet arriud',

Much

Much doubting, leaſt himſelf had miſconceiud'
The place agreed on, and begins to fear,
Leaſt she had comd' before, and miſt him there:
Then to his preſent God recurres for ayde,
And proſtrat on his face, with feruour prayd:
My Lord and God, who this pure ſoule didſt frame,
To the eternal honour of thy name,
Since t'was thy will, and ordinance diuine,
That I at firſt, found this choyce friend of thine,
Oh let me once more haue the bliſſe to ſee
The creature, which hath ſo much pleaſed thee:
Let me not fruſtrat of my hopes retourne,
My ſinnes, my shame, and iuſt repulſe, to mourne
In empty celles: This ſayd his watry eyes
Sends to the woods, alas thoſe feeble ſpyes
Retourne bad newes: for hauing markt' the flood
It's channel deep, betwixt them and the wood,
Propound a new doubt, not conceiud' before,
How she should paſſe vnto the hither shoar:
(No boate in ſight) but this doubt's quickly cleard,
When she vnto his hopeleſſe eyes appeard,
Like to a new ſun, riſing on the ſtrand:
And ſigning with her wonder-working hand
The ſmiling flood: begins to marche thereon
As t'were firme land: euen as the blushing ſun
Droopt' in the weſt, as shamd' to shew his beames,
Whiles a more glorious ſun shind' on thoſe ſtreames:
Yet at the wonder, he his head inclines
And with dewe reuerence his place reſignes:

The waues the while more ſmooth and ſoftly fleet,
Playing ſoft muſicke to her naked feet,
Which (forc't by vpper ſtreames to part) they kiſſe,
And murmure, as robd' of their greateſt bliſſe,
Yet leaſt their ſtand might fright her, they reſtraine
Their owne zeal, haſting gladly to the maine.
Zozim more ſenceleſſe, then the ſenceleſſe waues,
(For they were vſed to ſuch wonders) raues,
And at the miracle amazed ſtands,
But as he would haue kneeld vpon the ſands,
She now approaching to the hither ſide,
Thus with a loud voyce, from the waters cryed:
Father will you t'a creature kneel? forbear:
Who in your handes the al-creator bear:
The monke obayes, nor dare infringe her will,
Which th'elements themſelues ioy to fullfill:
She landing kneeles, and kneeling humbly ſayes
Bleſſe me, o father, bleſſe me: he diſplayes
His wondring handes to heauen: oh bleſſed be
Our God, the God of truth, whoſe workes we ſee
Neuer belye his wordes: he promiſe made,
And verifyes in thee, what then he ſayd,
That all ſuch, as their ſoules from ſin would clear,
Like to himſelf in greatneſſe ſhould appear:
Glory to thee my lord and ſauiour, who
By this thine handmayd, haſt giuen me to know,
How far I was from true perfection, when
I thought my ſelf (oh foole) the beſt of men.
But she whoſe famisht ſoule breaths pureſt fyers

Humbled in preſence of her God, deſyers
The father in his office to proceed,
Saying the Pater, and Apoſtles Creed:
With trembling handes, he warily vnfolds
The ſacred hoaſt: and to her full view holds:
Th'aſſiſting angels to the place repayre,
Commanding ſilence to the whiſpering ayre,
Which now affoardes but ſparingly ſuch breath
As might preſerue th'inhabitants from death:
Thoſe bleſſed ſpirits with mild horrours shrinke,
And at the preſence of their maker ſinke
In loue's abyſſe: admiring with glad shame,
A ſinner's ſoule, fierd with a greater flame,
And more intenſe then theirs: whiles she with tears
Arming her breaſt, againſt it's pious fears,
Swimming in feruour, and loue's ſweeteſt ſweetes,
With opend' mouth, her great redeemer meetes:
The ſpheres ſtood ſtil: whiles heauen and earth amazd,
With awful ſilence, and high wonder gazd'
Vpon her rauisht ſoule: all motions ceaſe,
Fearful to interrupt her mind's ſweet peace:
Whiles she poſſeſt of her rich obiect feedes
On pleaſure, which all words, al thought exceedes:
And now fore-ſeeing her long-wished end
To be at hand: her thoughts with feruour tend
To ioyes eternal, and inſpired tongue
Swan-like, repeats part of old Simeon's ſong:
Now thou thy ſeruant doeſt diſmiſſe o Lord
In peace: according to thy bleſſed word.

For mine eyes: thy ſaluation haue ſeen.
Here she brake of: and riſing from the green
(Proud of it's burden) thus to Zozim ſpake,
Yet father, I haue one requeſt to make,
Which you muſt not denye me: take the paines
A year hence, to reuiſit thoſe wild plaines,
Where firſt we met: for by th'old torrent, where
We held diſcourſe together this laſt year,
You once againe shal ſee me, if you pleaſe:
As t'is long ſince decreed: now goe in peace.
Can ſaints deceaue then? how, her ſelf knowes wel:
But pittying his iuſt grief, forbears to tel:
Whiles he her words and meaning both miſtakes,
And's greateſt miſery, his comfort makes:
With glad tears he replyes: the heauens beſt know,
How willingly I now would with thee goe,
And euer feed vpon that ſoule of thine,
In which all things be heauenly, and diuine:
But earth muſt not be heauen: yet ere I leaue
Thy gratious ſight, diſdain not to receaue
This ſlender portion: which ſayd, he vncaſd'
His litle burden, and before her placd'
The choyce of his prouiſion: forth she ſtrecht
Her humble hand, and to her bleſt mouth reacht
A grain or two of lentel, and no more,
For grace she ſaid her food was, and beſt ſtore.
But her high-mounting thoughts il brooke delayes,
And parting, she the doleful father prayes,
Not to forget her wants: with ſtreaming eyes,

He to

He to her dear feet cleaues: and throbbing eyes
Pray for the holy church, the empyre, and
For me, who moſt in need of your help ſtand:
Longer he would, but dares not, her detaine,
Whom to importune, he knew t'was in vaine:
Loath he departs, ah litle dreaming then,
Neuer to ſee thoſe ſaintlike eyes agen!
Whiles she makes haſte backe, to the longing wood,
Walking vpon the once more happy flood.
Ah man what art thou? whoſe (tho God-like) mind
Yet reeles, and waues, with euêry litle wind:
The world's the tennis-court, thou art the ball,
Now with a lofty bound, now lowly fall,
Twixt chance and paſſion toſt: nor old, nor yong,
Bleſt with a ſetled fortune: neuer long,
Nor twice together pleaſd': for following woes
Stil with diſtaſte thy few good minuts cloſe.
If perfect men, euen in ambitions which
Tend to ſole goodneſſe, paſſion can bewitch:
What may thoſe wretches hope, whoſe loue is ſin,
Where shal their bad dayes end, or good begin?
There ioy is miſery: their beſt hopes Hell:
Where fetterd by their owne baſe choyce they dwell,
He whoſe high-flying ſoule breaths pureſt flames,
And onely at eternal obiects aymes,
His heart in vndeſerued ſorrow ſteepes,
And for a mortal creature's abſence weeps,
Yet much at his owne weakeneſſe he repines,
With multy-plyëd actes his will reſignes,

Labours againſt the ſtreame, and ſtriues in vaine
Self-ſeeking ſence, and nature to reſtraine,
For goodneſſe no leſſe powerful is to moue,
Then beautye, eyther paſſiõn, or loue:
Humbled, he ponders man's vnſetled ſtate,
And at his owne much wonders, who ſo late
Did with ſuch zeale to her bleſt ſight aſpire,
Sorrow now ſpringing from fullfilld' deſire,
Hereby inſtructed, that mans ſpatious mind
Can not within frayle circles be confind,
But as firſt from eternall orbes it came,
So nothing can content it but the ſame.
Home he retournes: and in a ſilent celle
Immures thoſe eyes, diſdaining now to dwell
On earthly obiects, hauing ſeen the beſt
Which that world's age could boaſt of, and moſt bleſt:
There he his thoughts on ioyes eternall bent,
Oft rectyfying his oft croſt intent,
And when, his ſoule with heauineſſe oppreſt,
Would ſome times interrupt his bodye's reſt,
His thoughts he to the wilderneſſe would ſend,
Wingd' meſſengers, to his all-knowing friend,
Crauing her prayërs: nor in fact doth erre,
Though much he ſeeme t'a crêature to deferre,
And more miſtake her dwelling: ſhe his tears
Both ſees, and pittyes, from the vpper ſpheres,
More pious now then euer, and obtaines
The mind's peace he deſired, and happy gaines,
Not dreaming whence: whereby that year he ſpends

In

In comforts great, and ſtil to greater tends.
The long-exſpected day appeard at laſt,
When he not mindleſſe of his promiſe, paſt
Ouer the Iordan, and with haſty pace,
The next way tooke to the appointed place;
Deluding hopes his boyling fancyes fyer,
And all ſpeed ſeemes more ſlack, than his deſier:
He runs, and runing, thinkes his feet but ſlow,
Not dreaming to what miſery they goe:
And who knowes? would he ſay, but that she ſtayes,
Expecting me, and for my coming prayes,
For ſaints their longings haue: t'was true, he ſayd:
She for their euerlaſting meeting prayd.
Arriud' he ſtrait ſends forth his buſye ſpyes,
Hoping to ſee thoſe long-ſince-cloſed eyes,
Too bright for earth to looke on: They by chance
In their retourne, vpon a ſmall caue glance,
Which in the maine rocke, by no mortal taught
Nature, art's Miſtriſſe, curiouſly had wrought,
And in the natiue ſtone, had framd' a doore:
Two lights aboue: beneath, a pummizd' flooer:
Stord' with a pleaſant fountaine, fruite, and shade,
Which to the ſpring a goodly palme tree made:
His heart with ioy beates: and his willing feet
Run, their ſuppoſed happineſſe to meet:
For t'was a place, which he (with reaſon) gheſt,
Heauen had prepard, for ſuch a heauenly gueſt.
Enterd, he findes her kneeling, with a face
Which yet retaind it's former zeale and grace:

Tho motion leſſe, depriud' of ſence and breath,
The ſweeteſt picture that erê grac't pale death,
Here firſt ſeen ſmiling: her ioynd hands applyed
T'a crucifix, which in the rockes maine ſide,
Her bodkin had (not without forme) deſignd,
Tho much leſſe perfect, than it, in her mind:
The monke admires her zeal, and loath to break
Her ſoules imagind' rapt, forbears to ſpeake:
But his impatient ears grudge that delight,
(Bad councellors) which onely bleſt his ſight,
And longing to inioy her heauenly voyce:
Their maiſter vrge, firſt, with ſome litle noyſe
Of booteleſſe ſighes, then in a louder tone,
As from a ſoule much ſuffering, to groane:
All fayling, to her keye-cold feet he creepes,
Where with good cauſe, tho yet vnknown, he weepes:
Too haſty lippes: ah whiles you kiſſe, you kill:
And guiltleſſe heart, with deadly horrors thrill:
Yet lipps may erre: his handes muſt alſo feele
Thoſe ſacred ſoales, as cold, as ſtarke as ſteel:
Stiff were her handes: her noſtrils without breath:
All certain tokens of a certaine death.
His ſorrow is too great to find a vent,
With drye eyes on that doleful obiect bent,
He ſtands more ſenceleſſe, than the ſenceleſſe ſtone,
The growing rocke had ſome life, he had none:
And life-leſſe might to this day haue remaind,
Had not her pure ſoule of her ſpouſe obtaind',
That her bare corpſe, expoſd' to open view,

Might by his meanes, receaue it's mortal dew:
Heauen his loſt ſenſes to their place reſtores,
And he his miſery in words deplores,
Which no pen can expreſſe: but moſt he grieues,
That he expreſſely ſent, as he beleeues,
To leaue her ſtory, and immortal fame
To after-times, had not inquir'd her name:
For it through chance, or rather hidden fate
He had forgot to aske, she to relate:
A new doubt, how to bury her, expelles
The former: and her bleſſed name reueales,
For whiles he ſeekes ſome toole, to breake the ground,
Her name, her age, and dying day he found,
In Syrian characters ſcord' on the ſand,
Eyther by angels, or her owne pure hand:
Hereby he learnes, that she had cloſd' her dayes
Twelue whole moneths ſince: and yet would think she prayes,
Such ſweet deuotion in her face appears,
And long-cloſd' lids, had he not miſt their tears:
For their dryed channels in her much-worne face,
Were then firſt markt without thoſe ſtreams of grace;
This want, himſelf not ſparingly, ſupplyes,
But queſtionleſſe would haue wept out his eyes,
Had not a more grim obiect, and as near,
Reſtraind his griefe, to make ſome roome for fear.
A hydeous lyon on his habit rubbes,
And trembling ſides with harmeleſſe noſtrils grubs,
Whiles he, now pale whith fear, amazed ſtands,

And ſtretcheth to the corpſe his palſey hands,
Praying for help: the beaſt, with fyery eyes
The death pale ſaints, and the whole caue ſurueyes.
Then awfully his round walkes, with a grace,
Might make him iudgd of more than mortal race:
Til at the ſaint's feet, a ful ſtop he makes,
And as himſelf ſo the whole caue he ſhakes.
The monkes white haires, with horror briſtled, ſtand,
Whiles he his whole length ſtretch forth on the ſand:
The rockes themſelues with terror ſeeme to ſinke,
And too weake, for ſo maine a burden, ſhrink:
The monſter couch't his ſhaggy outſide ſmoothes,
And dreadful pawes, now mildly licking, ſoothes
The trembling father, with a fawning chear,
Expelling part both of his griefe, and fear:
Who taking heart, thus ſpoke: Thou king of beaſtes
Which neuer breakes thy maker's dreadful heſts,
More bleſt herein, than man: ſince his high will
Hath ſent the hither, in his name, ful-fill
Thy happy office, and dig out a graue,
T'interre this ſacred corpſe in it's owne caue:
The beaſt with fury flyes to worke, and tears
The ground vp with his dreadful clawes; new feares
Aſſayle the monk's heart, leaſt ſome ſparkling ſtone
Should maime the ſacred carcaſſe, or his owne:
So fiercely he, earth's craggy entralls riues,
And round about the litle parlor driues:
Yet wary in his fury, euer keepes
That compaſſe harmeleſſe, where the bleſt ſaint ſleepes.

His panting ſides with his owne ſteere he beates
Breaths fyêr, and ruine to the whol rocke threates.
His shaggy fleece waues with his angry wind,
And ſtares, with horrour quilted: he inclind
Cloſe to his taske, both with his teeth, and clawes,
The harder crags breakes: lighter mold with drawes:
And now inter'd in his owne worke he lyes,
Yet ſtil workes on: enough, the father cryes:
His furious labours in an inſtant ceaſe,
And he by Zozim bleſt departs in peace:
Whiles the ſad monke in ſtreames of ſorrow fleets,
And her cold limmes in his owne mantel sheetes.
All rites performd, the ſacred coiſe he rears
With due reſpect, and to it's manſion beares,
Where once more, at her bleſſed feet he fel,
Kiſt them, and weeping tooke his laſt farewell:
Firſt throwing in the ſand, and lighter mold,
Then shiuerd crags, and bigger ſtones he rold',
Of which, vpon her armes and facred breaſt,
The figure of a homely croſſe he dreſt:
And paying the laſt tribut of his tears,
Retournes to his owne celle: where ful of yeares,
And ſanctitye, whiles het ſtrange life he writes,
She him to euerlaſting ioyes inuites:
His ſoule to heauen, his bones to earth retourne,
And peacefully reſt in their natiue vrne.
Bleſt payre of ſaints: to whoſe al honourd shrines
My blacke muſe addes theſe late recanting lines,
Mildly accept of her vnfained zeale,

And by your prayers, ſtrengthen mine appeale
From that of iuſtice, to ſweet mercy's throne,
Moſt bleſt of ſinners, not to thee vnknown:
Mercy it ſelf can not shew more diuine,
Than by remitting greater ſins than thine.
Diſdaine not therefore to prepare a place,
For my ſtaind ſoule · great ſins requyer great grace.
And mercy calles on mercyes : be my guide
To thoſe great mercyes which thy ſelf haſt tryed:
That there thy prayſe I may for euer ſing,
(A laureld poet) to a happyêr ſtring.

Amen. Deo gratias.

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